

Land Endowment of Nawab Muhammad Ali Wallajah in Tiruchirappalli region with special reference to Christian Frederick Schwartz

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Abstract

Land possessed great value and the gift of land was a marker of status for the ruler. Land grant were given by the rulers was not only for extend cultivation and agriculture to new areas. They did land grants in order to carry out elaborate rituals, to establish educational institutions, to construct worship places and thus to win the hearts of their subjects. These land endowments which brought social and cultural harmony in the society. This paper traces the donation of land for the oldest Anglican Christ Church was donated by the Nawab of the Carnatic.

Keywords: Endowment, Inam, Contribution, Donation, Charity, Carnatic, Nawab

Introduction

The kingdom of the Carnatic Sultanate was located in South India between about 1690 and 1855. The word ‘Carnatic’ was given by Europeans to Southern India between the Eastern Ghats and the Coromandel Coast of Madras presidency. The Arcot Princely state was situated in the Carnatic region. The word ‘Arcot’ is derived from Tamil word Aarukaadu which means ‘Six Forests’. This Arcot reign was ruled by two dynasties known as Nawayat and Wallajah. The succession war between the two dynasties, Nawayat and Wallajah in 1749 - 1752 was merely presented as ‘the Second Carnatic War’ the war between the English East India Company and the French East India Company¹. Muhammad Ali Wallajah ascended the throne as the Nawab of the Carnatic and successfully controls the Arcot. He maintained cordial relation with the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II and often referred to as the Subedar of the Carnatic. He was also a close ally of the British East India Company. Nawab Muhammad Ali Wallajah was great ruler in the lineage of Nawabs of Arcot celebrated for his charity.² Nawab respected all religions and he donated land to the members of different religious communities. Nawab Mohamed Ali Wallajah endowed a land in Trichy to Danish Missionary member Christian Frederick Schwartz

Nawab Muhammad Ali Wallajah

Nawab usually refers to a native governor during the time of Mughal Empire. After the fall of mighty Mughal emperors, Nawab of Carnatic region declared his independence. Later Mughals were not capable to control the disintegration of Mughal Empire. Nawayat dynasty of Nawab of Arcot was founded by Sadatullah Khan and this dynasty came to end after the murder of Sadatullah Khan II. Mohammed Anwaruddin was the founder Wallajah Dynasty in the Carnatic. The combined forces of Chanda Sahib, Muzaffar Jang and the French under Charles Joesph Patissier, Marquis de Bussy Castelnau, defeated Anwaruddin in the Battle of Ambur on August 3, 1749. The British supported Muhammed Ali Khan Walajah, son of Anwarduddin, who controlled Trichinopoly (Tiruchirappalli). The war was ended by the Treaty of Pondicherry in 1754. It recognized Muhammad Ali Khan Walajah as nawab of Arcot.³ Muhammad Ali lived a glorious life before the arrival of the British East India Company on the scene. He had a kind gesture towards poor in the society. Mohammad Ali opened shops in Tiruchi to sell rice to poor at subsidized rates. He also opened feeding houses where the destitute received food free.⁴

The Inams under the Nawabs of Arcot

The core of Muslim population and their development in Tamil Nadu, with special reference to Tiruchirappalli District consists of two mixed races which are direct descendants from the Muslim immigrants from the North who migrated largely in the regime of Nawabs. There are *Rowthars* who are chiefly traders and *Panjuvatis* who by trade are cotton cleaners. The former are also called Labbais. Tiruchirappalli District, being a business centre, attracted Muslims and they settled in the District. The political domination the Nawab made Tiruchirappalli as a centre of culture and Islamic learning. The Nawabs rule paved the way for the construction of Masjids and Madarasahs in this region. These institutions patronized by the Nawabs with sufficient endowments.

The word 'Inam' was derived from the Arabic word Nama, which means to confer a favour.⁵ An Inam also means ordinarily a gift by a superior to an inferior. In the south India it is applied to the grant by the state of the permanent right in one case to occupy land without paying rent to the state and in another case to collect government assessment on land. The grant was referred to as *manya* in Sanskrit and *manyam* in Tamil. The Britishers also followed the practice of privilege to Inam lands.⁶

The Nawabs of Arcot were granted Inams to both Muslim and non-Muslim religious institutions. It paved the way for the Hindu Muslim unity and understandings in the Nawabi Kingdom. Some of the Inams given by the Nawabs for religious institutions later came to be called as Prince of Arcot Endowments.

Religious Inams

The *Inams* were broadly classified as major and minor Inams. When a grant was made of a whole village it was known as *Dehuat* or a major Inam. When some lands in a village were granted it was known as a minor *Inam*.⁷ A considerable portion of the *Inam* tenure in the Madras Presidency belonged to the religious institutions of the country, both Muhammeden and Hindus. They were held either directly by the support of the institution or indirectly for the various services rendered to the religious institutions. This religious *Inams* were made by the Nawabs were also called *Devadayams*.⁸

Inams for Islamic institutions consisted of lands attached to the mosques, the place of worship of the Muslims. The other important Muslim religious Inams were *Takiyas* or fakir Inams granted for the seats where the fakirs, the Muhammeden religious mendicants resided. *Inams* were granted to dargahs, the tombs of Muslim saints were known as dargah *Inams*.

Initially the Sufi *khanqahs* or hospices were founded by the Sufi Masters with the help of their disciples. These residing centres had elevated as cult centre or shrine after the death of *Pir*. The local rulers were magnanimously granted lands for the maintenance of *dargahs* or *khanqah*. They also provided food and other amenities to Sufis and their disciples. The Nayaks, Setupathis, Tondaimans, Maratha rulers, the Nawabs of Arcot of Tamil country largely donated lands to *dargahs* in their locality and patronised the shrines. These tax free lands were known as *inams*. Some of the *inams* given by the Nawabs for religious institutions later came to be called as "Prince of Arcot Endowments".⁹ The Nawabs of Carnatic made grant to large number of Religious and Charitable institutions in Tiruchirappalli region.¹⁰ The Nawabs of Arcot granted Inams to Christian churches in the district of Tirunelvely and Thanjavur.¹¹

Fakir Inams: Fakirs were wandering Dervishes teaches Islam and living on alms. The term has become a common Urdu, Bengali, and Hindi byword for beggar. Fakirs were Muslim ascetics and Sufis who have taken vows of poverty and worship, renounce all relations and possessions. The four orders of *fakirs* are *Baanuva*, *Jalali*, *Mathari* and

Malangu. The Nawabi rulers granted separate Inams to fakirs who propagated Islamic and Sufi principles throughout the Tamil country. Nawab Muhammed Ali gave an Inam of 7 Cawnies of dry land in Tiruchirappalli for meeting the expenses of travelling fakirs. The Inam was given to Purvolla Shah Darvesh in 1207 AH/ AD 1792.¹² He gave another Inam grant of 32 Cawnies of dry land in the village of Elavelloru to Lal Shah for the maintenance of Khanqas of fakirs.¹³ A 11 chey of land as Inam in the village of Perur was given by Nawab to a rest house for fakir. The recipient was Meer Kareemuddin given in 1207 AH/ AD 1792.¹⁴ Another fakir *Inam* was given by Nawab Anwaruddin to Darvesh Muhammed was 12 Chey of land in Tennur village granted in 1160 AH/ AD 1747.¹⁵ The Shrotrium Inams were generally given in favour of Brahmin scholars. This type of Inam were given to the servants of state as a reward for their part services in later period.

Mushrottee Inams

The *Mushrottee* Inam were cash Inams given by the Nawabs for various services like duties in mosque, dargahs etc., *Mushrottee* in Arabic means ‘conditional’. This Inam was given on certain conditions. This type of Inam was given for services in dargahs like cleaning of dargah lightening, providing water and other general maintenance.

A person by name Muhammed Hussain of Alatoor, aged 70 was given a Mushrottee Inam of about one pagoda in 1203 AH/ AD 1788.¹⁶ The same type of Inam grants were given to many individuals. Sharee Mohamed of Bowangherry(Bhuvanagiri) received seven pagodas in 1161 AH/ AD 1748. Sulaiman Shah of Trenomalle (Thiruvannamalai) received 2 pagodas and Abdul Qasim received eight pagodas in the same year.¹⁷ The maximum amount of Mushrottee Inams given for dargah expenses was about nine pagodas per annum and the minimum of two pagodas

Inams under the Nawab Mohamed Ali

Nawab Mohamed Ali was a great benefactor and donor of lands to *dargahs* and mosque. *Amirul Hind –Walajah* was the title conferred on Nawab Muhammad Ali. This honorary title given by the Mughal Emperor¹⁸ became the honorific of the dynasty; ‘*Wala*’ in Persian means superior and ‘*Jah*’ in the same language signifies dignity and the title stands for the great honour bestowed by the Mughal Emperor.¹⁹ Nawab Mohamed Ali gave Inams for the construction of mosques and travelers choultries that were attached to the mosque. He granted 42 *cheys* of land in Lalgudi village to Sheik Madar Sha for the above purpose.²⁰ He also granted Inams for the expenses of religious festivals of dargahs called *Urus*. A village Kee.Kalathoor was given to Meer Kutubddin Qadiri for the above mentioned purpose. The Inam was *sarvamaniam*²¹ in nature with annual revenue of about 152 pagodas.²² Nawab Mohamed Ali granted Inams to perform religious functions known as *fathihas* and *kantoori* festivals performed in the dargahs. He gave the village Pothakkudi with the annual revenue value of 265 pagodas as *Inam* to Ismail Khan for perform *fathihas*. The *Inam* was given in the year AD 1784/ 1199 AH. It was a *sarvamaniam* type of Inam.²³ The revenue officer of Nawab Mohamed Ali named Etaybar Khan endowed and constructed the Marakkayar dargah of Saiyyad Sultan Ibrahim of Erwadi.²⁴ The dargah of Shahul Hameed in Nagore received lavish bounties from Muhammed Ali who made several mosques, dargahs and other Muslim religious foundations.²⁵ He also showed patronage to Hindu temples by giving religious Inams most of them were tax free-*sarvamaniam*. He gave Kaunday a village in Madurai district as a *sarvamaniam* to Meenakshi temple with annual income 249 pagodas. He gave the land to Rev. Christian Frederick Schwartz in 1766 and permitted to establish the Anglican Christian Church in Tiruchirappalli for their missionary activities and also present in person on the occasion of the inauguration of Dr. Schwartz’s School in Tiruchirappalli.

Christian Frederick Schwartz

Christian Frederick Schwartz was the most remarkable Prussian Lutheran missionary to India in the eighteenth century. He was preacher, educational innovator, school master, diplomat, envoy, statesman, protector regent, linguist and Apostle to South India. Schwartz was born on 8 October 1726 at Sonnenburg in Prussia. During his early age, he took keen interest in missionary and charitable work. Schwartz spent some time in England to acquire the English language and learned Tamil language in Tamilnadu for his missionary activities and to assist in a translation of the Bible. He was the German Lutheran Protestant missionary came to India as a part of the Danish Mission to spread Christianity in India in 1750. Initially, he was in his headquarters, Tranquebar is a small coastal village on the east coast of Tamilnadu in Nagapatinam District. He mastered in Tamil and Portuguese language during his 11 years service in Tranquebar. Later, he moved to Tiruchirappalli on 30 July 1750. He had an amicable relationship with Indian rulers like Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysore, Rajah Serforji II, a Maratha ruler of Tanjore and Nawab Mohammed Ali Wallajah, the Nawab of Carnatic. He learned Urdu in order to converse with Muslims especially with the representatives of the rulers in South India. During the march and besiege of Madurai in 1764, Schwartz did in ministering to sick, wounded and dying *sepoys* and soldiers was so appreciated that he was given an award of nine hundred pagodas (gold currency which was equivalent to about £360) from the Nawab of the Carnatic. These funds were useful for building new schools, including a special 'orphan school' for the neglected offspring of the soldiers.²⁶ Schwartz was the founder of historical church, a larger and proper place of worship for the Christians in Tiruchirappalli. A stone structure, seating fifteen hundred persons was completed and dedicated on 18 May 1766. Within its large enclosed compound, 'Christ Church' schools in both English and Tamil and a commodious mission house were eventually added.

Christ Church

'Founder of the Christ Church' Rev. Christian Frederick Schwartz stayed in Trichy in between 1762 - 1772. As soon as he arrived in Trichy, he built the first small prayer house in 11 July 1762 for the 8 Germans and 13 Tamil Lutherans. Later he established a mission center which was supported by Society for Propagation of Christian Knowledge, London. It has to be noted that the Anglican SPCK accepted a Lutheran pastor as their missionary in Trichy. Englishmen in the Garrison started coming to church more in number. Hence Schwartz felt that the small church in Trichy was insufficient for the English officers to worship. Then with the permission received from Madras on March 13, 1765 the foundation stone was laid for the church in the land which was donated by Nawab Mohammed Ali Wallajah, the Nawab of Carnatic. This is the second oldest Anglican Church after St. Mary's in Fort St. George in Chennai. It is located in a prime area on Nandi Koil Street, near Teppakulam. The church building was constructed by the East India Company Engineers and they were ably assisted by the local skilled artisans. The superstructure was built with brick work set in sukki lime mortar. The main church building is rectangular in shape with the central portion having a higher roof. On the east face the altar was built as a semi circle with a high domed roof. Large internal arches supported by circular columns separated the main hall from the side wings. The roof was traditional Madras terrace supported by massive Burma teak wood rafters. The roof was over 1'0" thick so as to be bomb proof from artillery fire. The flooring was done with red terracotta tiles. Several graves of East India Company army officers are inside the church building which were overlaid with engraved stone slabs.

A branch of this church is now known to be St. John's Church. In this church the mortals of employees of the East India Company have been buried.

Conclusion

The land endowment of Nawab was a help to Schwartz has been given to all people in spreading Christianity and other service has been made to all the people from the Christ Church. This church was dedicated to the glory of God under the name of Christ Church by Rev. Christian Frederick Schwartz on the 1st May 1766 the Nawab of Carnatic gave the land. This church is now 256 years old. This church is an integral part of Triuchi's history. The valediction of C.S.I. Christ Church Fort's 250th anniversary year was celebrated on 27 May 2016 with a host of celebrations highlighting its contribution to the realm of education and social services. The Christ church occupies a unique place in the history of South India as the site for building the church was donated by Nawab Mohammed Ali Wallajah, the Nawab of Carnatic.

End Notes

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